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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQI DEPUTY NSA,S VIEWS ON SECURITY, ELECTIONS
DELAY AND ANBAR RECONCILIATION

Classified By: Anbar PRT Leader James Soriano. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (U) This is a PRT Anbar reporting cable.

12. (S/REL MCFI) Summary. Iraqi Deputy National Security Advisor Safa expressed his views on a variety of issues to Anbar PRT Poloff. Safa commented on the positive impact of increased U.S. troop presence, his interpretation of the evolving security threat from growing Sunni militias, impact of perceptions on intelligence analysis, likely delay in provincial elections and the recent dialogue with Anbari tribes. End Summary.

More U.S. Troops) Good, If Used Correctly

13. (S/REL MCFI) Safa began the December 19 meeting by querying Poloff if it was true additional U.S. troops are deploying to Iraq. Poloff responded USG strategy was currently under revision, with changes expected to be announced in January. Regardless of changes, the U.S. nonetheless remained committed to Iraq,s success. Safa believed recent press reports of the Kane-Keagan brief from the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) would be the &next plan8 for Iraq. He added that the GOI in general had been dissatisfied with the Iraq Study Group,s recommendations.

14. (S/REL MCFI) Safa opined that if more U.S. troops were sent to Baghdad, they would be effective, if appropriately employed. He stated that any military actions must be applied uniformly throughout Baghdad to avoid the Coalition appearing to favor one group/faction over another. Safa added that Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP) participation was necessary if any Baghdad operation was to succeed in the long term. But also acknowledged U.S. forces were still critically important. Any IA or IP operation would fail without U.S. participation.

15. (S/REL MCFI) Continuing on Baghdad strategy, Safa commented that current plans are drawn up based on two hostile factions, AQI and Jaysh Al-Madhi (JAM), while a third, growing faction is being overlooked. In his view, Sunni militias, funded mostly by Saudi Arabia, are emerging, but are not being addressed properly. In contrast, while Safa openly characterized JAM as a major threat, he downplayed (as much of the GOI has before) Iran,s involvement in fostering Iraqi instability.

Intelligence vs Perception vs Reality

16. (S/REL MCFI) Safa stressed that accurate intelligence was still lacking in the Iraqiservices. Rather, perceptions and

bias often overshadowed intelligence conclusions. He referred to Iraqi intelligence gatherers and analysts having sectarian prejudices, which resulted in incorrect conclusions. Also, because CF intelligence capabilities are so much more extensive and technologically superior than their Iraqi counterpart, Iraqis tend to adopt CF intelligence conclusions, even when their own local ground truth tells them otherwise.

¶7. (S/REL MCFI) Along the lines of perception-based reality, Safa alluded to sectarian perceptions of the ISF and CF. Iraqis still consider the IA being Sunni-dominated and IP being Shia-dominated. Regarding CF, Safa cautioned that while an infusion of additional U.S. troops into Baghdad would be positive, care must be taken to avoid being viewed as strengthening the occupation.⁸ According to Safa, these perceptions, regardless of accuracy, continue to color local Iraqi views of the ISF and CF.

Elections) Not in Near Term

¶8. (S/REL MCFI) Safa expressed the firm view that provincial elections were unlikely to occur anytime soon. He asserted that political players currently in office want to keep the status quo. The Kurds in the north are content with their situation. SCIRI dominates the south, and wants to keep doing so. Rival Sadrist in the south recognize their lesser role, but believe their growing unpopularity would lead to even less influence if elections were held. Finally, most Iraqi political parties are funded, either directly or indirectly, from non-Iraqi sources (Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria). As such, these non-Iraqi financiers do not want to

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expend more funds for new campaigns and/or new political candidates.

Anbar Reconciliation - Much Potential

¶9. (S/REL MCFI) Turning specifically towards Anbar province, Safa inquired on conditions there. He (and his NSC staff separately) acknowledged they have no information on this western province except from MNF-I/PRT sources and press reports. Safa was informed that the first tranche of GOI reconstruction funds had been received, with MNF-W providing its transport and security. Safa said he was not surprised MNF-W was providing this support as the U.S. is considered the most trusted broker. He commented that if successful reconciliation can be achieved in Anbar, it would facilitate quelling the Sunni insurgency nationwide. Safa therefore encouraged the dialogue between the Anbari sheikhs, the Anbar provincial government and ourselves be continued. He concluded that the pending Anbari sheikh reconciliation conference, to include those in Jordan, would likely yield positive results.

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